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KNOWLEDGE OF THE SYSTEM $\text{H}_2\text{O}-\text{SO}_3-\text{N}_2\text{O}_3$ REPORTI. THE SYSTEM $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4-\text{H}_2\text{O}-\text{N}_2\text{O}_3$

K. Stopperka, F. Kilz

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KNOWLEDGE OF THE SYSTEM $\text{H}_2\text{O}-\text{SO}_3-\text{N}_2\text{O}_3$. REPORT I.

THE SYSTEM $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4-\text{H}_2\text{O}-\text{N}_2\text{O}_3$

K. Stopperka, F. Kilz

SUMMARY

/58*

The amount of N_2O_3 being absorbed in 50-100% H_2SO_4 at 19, 60, and 95°C is directly proportional to the acid concentration and inversely proportional to the temperature. NO^+ formation, according to the above-formulated equation occurs only at H_2SO_4 concentrations greater than 52%. Absorption in highly concentrated sulfuric acid results in the formation of crystalline NOHSO_4 (powder data being communicated).

1. INTRODUCTION

N_2O_3 in the gas phase is not available in pure form under standard pressure and temperature, but rather the following equilibrium results from an equal mole-mixture of NO and NO_2 for the constituents NO , NO_2 , N_2O_3 and N_2O_4 [1, 2]:



According to Abel and Proisl [1], at 25°C and 760 torr, only 10% of an equimolar mixture of NO and NO_2 is present as undissociated N_2O_3 . Thus, it would be possible that competing reactions occur during the absorption between N_2O_3 , NO_2 , N_2O_4 and NO on the one hand, and sulfuric acid on the other. Studies by other authors [3-8] and our own observations lead to the conclusion that in this gas mixture the main mass of the N_2O_3 in this equilibrium reacts with the sulfuric acid. The momentary adjustment of the N_2O_3 - equilibriums (I and III) proceeds very fast and the N_2O_3 taken from the equilibrium system by the absorption is instantly replenished.

* Numbers in margin indicate pagination in original foreign text.

It was recognized very early that N_2O_3 reacts with sulfuric acid to form $NOHSO_4$ [9-14]. However, these qualitative studies were mostly aimed at clarifying the reaction mechanisms in the lead chamber process [15] and resulted in most contradictory statements.

Millen [16] was the first to state that the following reaction occurred:



He arrived at this conclusion after an evaluation of Raman spectrographs run on the reaction products of the replacement reaction between concentrated sulfuric acid and liquid N_2O_3 .

Chanukvadze and colleagues [17] believe to have established a compound $H_2SO_4 \cdot N_2O_3$ (m.p. $56^\circ C$) in the $H_2SO_4 - H_2O - N_2O_3$ system which decomposes when heated to $70-80^\circ C$. In addition, they examined the solubility of N_2O_3 in 72.2, 48.45 and 26.68% sulfuric acid and determined that the solubility of N_2O_3 decreases with decreasing acid concentration.

Since an accurate knowledge of the $H_2SO_4 - H_2O - N_2O_3$ system is of basic importance to the tower sulfuric acid industry, it seemed desirable to take up the studies of the $SO_3 - H_2O - N_2O_3$ system again. /60

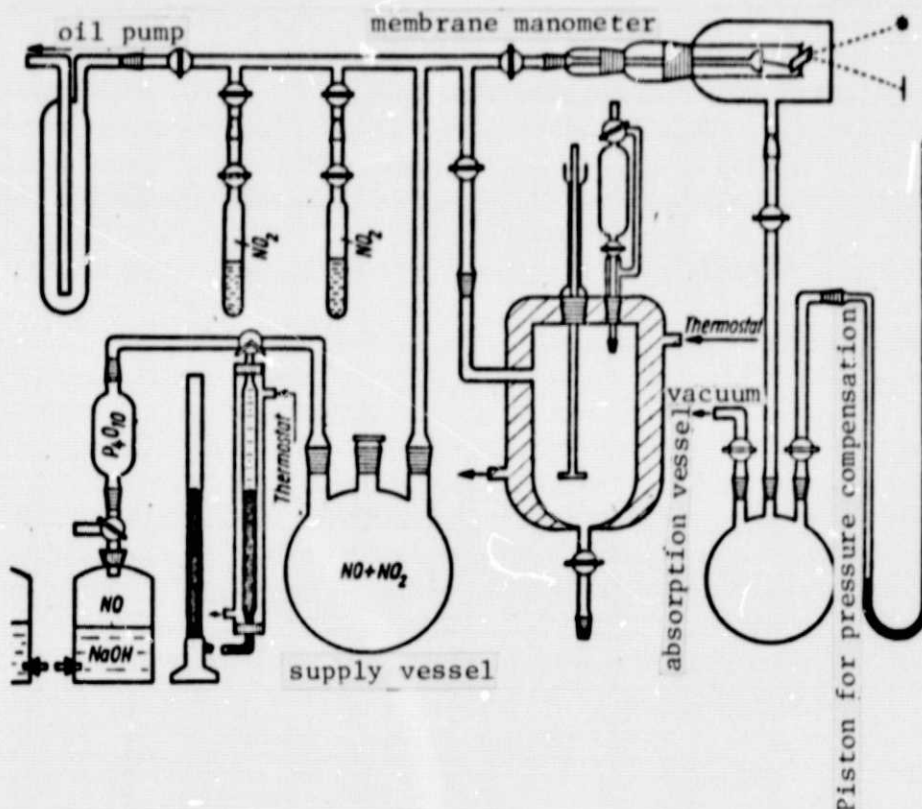
2. TEST RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1 Absorption of N_2O_3 in sulfuric acid

The measurements of absorption were performed with the apparatus illustrated in Figure 1.

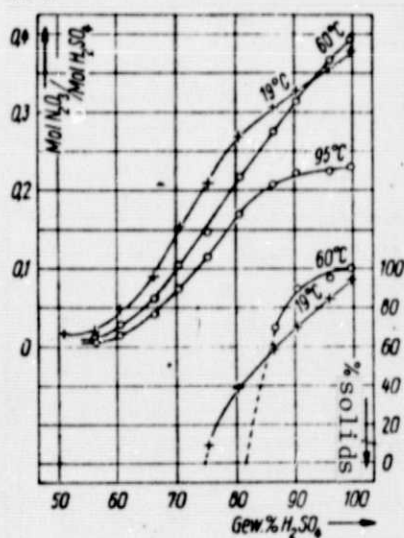
A graphic illustration of the absorption process is shown in Figure 2.

In general, it was determined that the absorbed quantity of N_2O_3 increases with decreasing temperature and increasing acid concentration. Up to a sulfuric acid concentration of 80%, the curves derived from the test data at 19, 60, and $95^\circ C$ have similar courses. Only above the named concentration does a difference appear. The slope change of the curve at $19^\circ C$ and about 80% H_2SO_4 - which leads to an intersection with the curve at $60^\circ C$ in the direction of greater sulfuric acid concentrations - is /61



/60

Figure 1: Measurement apparatus.



/61

Figure 2: Course of absorption.

understandable if we remember the amount of solids precipitating during the absorption process [18] (bottom curves in Figure 2).

This portion of solids is 40% in the sulfuric acid concentration mentioned above, and is already so great that the mixing of the crystal slurry by the agitator is insufficient, i.e., the sulfuric acid clinging to the crystals is removed from the reaction with N_2O_3 . For the 60°C and 95°C test series, this effect did not

occur. In this temperature range, no solids precipitate during the absorption. Only after cooling off to room temperature does the precipitation begin in the N_2O_3 -saturated sulfuric acid solutions treated at 60°C and 86% H_2SO_4 . The absorption solutions of the 95°C test series, however, remain clear even at room temperature and do not precipitate after standing.

The relatively low N_2O_3 -uptake of the more highly-concentrated sulfuric acids in the 95°C test series is apparently due to the fact that pure $NOHSO_4$ melts and decomposes at 73.5°C and this tendency to decompose acts against the formation of a higher NO^+ -ion concentration.

The measurements permit us to draw the conclusion that the absorbed N_2O_3 quantity will continue to fall for additional increases in temperature of the absorbant solution.

The absorbant temperature, the rate of agitation and the degree of N_2O_3 saturation of the absorption solutions are of particular influence on the rate of absorption. As a result of supersaturation a clear reduction in the rate of absorption occurs shortly before the precipitation; however, this reduction ceases immediately after the onset of crystallization.

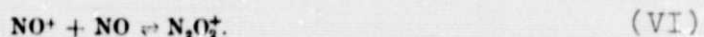
If we observe the concentration range in Figure 2, in which the sulfuric acid solutions react with N_2O_3 to form nitrosyl ions, then the question of the reaction mechanism assumes a greater interest. On the basis of the IR-spectrographic studies of the $H_2SO_4 - H_2O$ system, it was recently demonstrated [19] that the region of existence for molecular sulfuric acid in the $H_2SO_4 - H_2O$ system lies between 75% and 100% H_2SO_4 . In this range, the concentration of molecular sulfuric acid increases to the extent that the HSO_4^- ion concentration falls. This concentration has the value of zero when the H_2SO_4 reaches 100% concentration. However, from the previous studies it is quite clear that even in the concentration range of 52% - 75% H_2SO_4 definite reactions with N_2O_3 occur. The reaction mechanism suggested by Millen [16] and by Gillespie and colleagues [20] in accordance with equation (IV) cannot be correct. Rather, if we regard the region of existence for H_2O and H_3O^+ , demonstrated by the studies on the $H_2SO_4 - H_2O$

162

system [19], then it is clear that a noticeable reaction occurs between the aqueous sulfuric acid and the N_2O_3 , even at concentrations at which the concentration ratio of H_3O^+ to H_2O is shifted far toward the formation of H_3O^+ ; and that in addition, only small amounts of molecular water are detected. It thus appears more correct to us to formulate the reaction mechanism according to the following equation (V):



The erroneous assumption of earlier authors that only molecular sulfuric acid was capable of reacting with N_2O_3 , according to equation (IV) to form NO^+ ions is attributable to the fact that they considered the molecular sulfuric acid to be the reaction partner with N_2O_3 rather than the agent which pulled water from the equilibrium (V) to hydrate its dissociation products and thus shifted this equilibrium to the right. If the necessary water were not drawn from the equilibrium according to equation (V) by subsequent reactions, then the NO^+ ion would not be able to stabilize. These phenomena were particularly evident when the experiment to absorb N_2O_3 in aqueous sulfuric acid (less than 50% H_2SO_4) was performed with the apparatus described in Figure 1. Whereas no reaction with formation of NO^+ ions was observed in the concentration range from 0 - 45% H_2SO_4 - except for a low physical dissolving [21] of the N_2O_3 , at concentrations between 45% and 52% H_2SO_4 a low level of reaction must be occurring because of the slightly blue coloration of the absorption solution. According to Seel [22], the sometimes very intense colorations appearing at higher sulfuric acid concentrations can be attributed to the formation of nitric oxide nitrosyl ions according to equation (VI). This coloration passes from blue to green, and finally yellow. /63



2.2 IR-Spectra of the Absorption Solutions.

The IR-spectra of the absorption solutions taken between silicon discs are shown in Figure 3.

If we compare these spectra with those of blank sulfuric acids of the same concentrations [19], then the dilution expected from

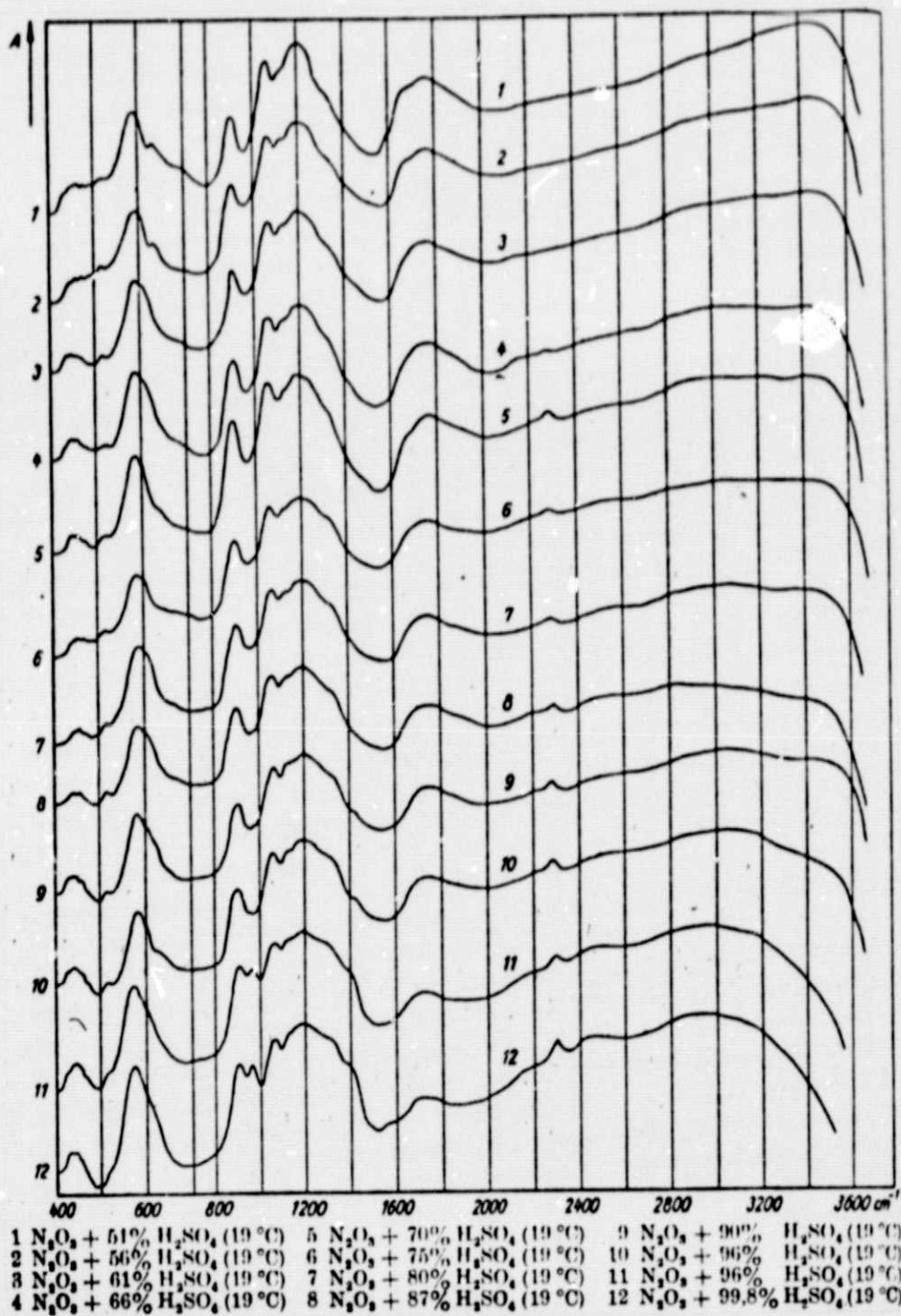


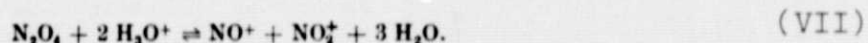
Figure 3: IR-spectra of the N_2O_3 -saturated absorption solutions.

from equation (V) can be found, especially at the higher concentrations (at which more N_2O_3 was absorbed).

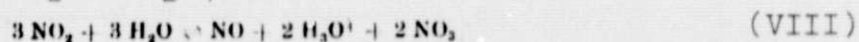
Although the $\nu_{as} S(OH)_2$ of molecular sulfuric acid is weak at 975 cm^{-1} in the IR-spectrum of a pure sulfuric acid sample of 90% H_2SO_4 , and becomes strong for 90% H_2SO_4 , this characteristic band for molecular H_2SO_4 was not observed, even in the IR-spectrum of an absorption solution of 96% H_2SO_4 treated at 19°C . However, if the absorption of N_2O_3 in 96% sulfuric acid is performed at 95°C , then the decreased N_2O_3 -absorption seen in Figure 2 results in a lower level of dilution according to equation (V) which can be clearly seen by the appearance of the $\nu_{as} S(OH)_2$ of H_2SO_4 at 975 cm^{-1} .

The characteristic absorption frequency [16, 23-25] for the NO^+ ion around 2300 cm^{-1} which corresponds to the νNO^+ appears weak in spectrum 4 of Figure 3, but becomes more pronounced in the more highly concentrated absorption solutions.

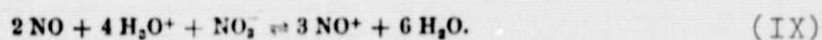
Absorption bands which could be attributed to the oscillations of the nitryl ion [26-28] were not observed. Thus, the condition necessary for an unequivocal absorption process - that only N_2O_3 reacts with the sulfuric acid according to equation (V), is confirmed. If a competing or secondary reaction proceeded between NO_2 or N_2O_4 and the absorption solution, then nitryl ions would be detectable according to equation (VII):



But since no absorption bands of nitrate ions are found in spectra 1 and 2 of Figure 3 - the latter could have resulted from the reaction of the NO_2 or N_2O_4 , according to equation (VIII):



and since noticeable $N_2O_2^+$ ion concentrations are detected on the basis of the pale blue coloring, it can be explained by an NO_3^- concentration which is less than the detection limit, or it is explained by Milligas [4] according to equation (IX):



3. EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

3.1 Apparatus and Empirical Methods

The apparatus used is shown in Figure 1. It can be coarsely

divided into three parts: the gas dosage unit, the absorption vessel and the device for regulating pressure.

The absorption vessel was provided with a thermostat, an agitator and a dropping funnel. The absorption solutions could be drained off by a stopcock for further examination.

It was difficult to find a method which made possible an accurate gas dosage. The simplest way, namely that of a volumetric dosage of a gas mixture prepared by mixing equal volumes of NO and NO₂ (or N₂O₄) cannot be considered if we remember the equilibrium from equation (II) since there is no blocking liquid which satisfies the requirements. Addition of the appropriate quantity of oxygen to a given quantity of NO, so that half of the NO reacts to form NO₂ in the desired final ratio of 1:1 for both components, fails because the NO dried for the absorption measurement over phosphorus (V)-oxide, will not react, or will react only incompletely - with oxygen [29-31].

Liquid N₂O₃ can be vaporized and the decrease in weight in the supply vessel could be used as a measure of the quantity of N₂O₃ absorbed; however, this will also not meet the requirements since N₂O₃ distills incongruously. Consequently, a preset quantity of liquid N₂O₃ must be quantitatively converted to the gaseous state to get an actual equimolar gas mixture. Difficulties are encountered here with regard to the 760-Torr pressure which is supposed to exist in the apparatus at the end of the absorption. Moreover, it must always be possible to quickly supplement the N₂O₃ consumed by the absorption, in the proper ratio.

We decided to introduce NO and NO₂ in equal quantities into a supply chamber as follows: Nitrogen monoxide was measured volumetrically by using Hg as the barrier liquid. Nitrogen dioxide was vaporized into the apparatus from a supply vessel and determined by weighing. In order to be able to control the dosage of both gases before and during the absorption as well as the pressure ratios in the apparatus, a manometer was needed. The indirect pressure measurement by means of a glass-membrane manometer [32-36] in balancing circuit design proved to be the simplest and most suitable for our purposes. The membrane had reproducible sensitivity to pressure differences of 1.5 Torr. In our apparatus

with a capacity of about 2 liters, that meant that 4 cm³ of gas had to be admitted before any reading of the pressure change would occur by the glass-membrane manometer. If two gases were present, which did not react with each other and which did not associate or dissociate, then one could admit a volume of each component which corresponded to a pressure change of 380 Torr and thereby arrive at a total pressure of 760 Torr. But since the components NO₂, N₂O₄, NO and N₂O₃ are present in the gas mixture, the corresponding equilibria (equations I-III) must be remembered.

For a mathematical formulation of the total system with its equilibria, in the first step, the partial pressure [37] of N₂O₃ is neglected - this is only permissible at normal pressure for temperatures above 150°C [1]. For P_{ges}^{**} , we have the following equation

$$P_{ges} = P_{NO} + P_{NO_2} + P_{N_2O_4} \quad (1)$$

we need

$$P_{NO} = 2 P_{N_2O_4} + P_{NO_2} \quad (2)$$

From (1) and (2) we have

$$3 P_{N_2O_4} + P_{NO_2} = P_{ges} \quad (3)$$

In addition, for the equilibrium from equation (II), when p_0 is the pressure of N₂O₄ before dissociation:

$$P_{NO_2} = 2 \alpha p_0 \quad (4)$$

$$P_{N_2O_4} = (1 - \alpha) p_0 \quad (5)$$

From (4) and (5), we have

$$P_{N_2O_4} = \frac{P_{NO_2}}{2\alpha} (1 - \alpha) \quad (6)$$

or

$$P_{NO_2} = \frac{2\alpha}{(1 - \alpha)} \cdot P_{N_2O_4} \quad (7)$$

For $P_{N_2O_4}$, we then have from (3) and (4),

$$P_{N_2O_4} = \frac{P_{ges}}{3 + \alpha} (1 - \alpha) \quad (8)$$

From the requirement that $p_{ges} = 760$ Torr and the calculated $p_{N_2O_4}$ from (8) by means of an assumed α^* -value, p_{NO_2} can be determined from (3). Now, all quantities are known so that finally, the value of p_{NO} can be calculated from (1).

**translator's note - ges = total.

Experimentally, we proceeded so that NO was admitted into the apparatus illustrated in Figure 1 (supply and absorption vessels) through a burette until the calculated value for p_{NO} had been reached. From the NO_2 -supply vessel, gas was added slowly until a total pressure of 760 Torr was reached for the gas mixture of N_2O_4 and NO_2 in the apparatus according to the equilibrium (II). By determining the weight differences, the NO_2 -mass was converted to a NO_2 -volume and compared to the NO-volume read from the burette. If the requirement $v_{\text{NO}} = v_{\text{NO}_2}$ was not met, then the given α^* -value was corrected again. The α^* -value was varied until the NO_2 -volume corresponded to the NO volume. At a temperature of 19°C , the α^* -value determined by approximation equalled 0.10.

The simplification needed for mathematical formulation - namely, the initial neglect of $p_{\text{N}_2\text{O}_3}$ - was then corrected by a pre-given α^* which had been checked for accuracy against the criterion that $v_{\text{NO}_2} = v_{\text{NO}}$, since this includes the equilibria (I) and (III).

When admitting the sulfuric acid solution into the absorption vessel, the total pressure falls in the apparatus as a result of the absorption of the N_2O_3 -portion at equilibrium, and NO and NO_2 must be supplemented to maintain the 760 Torr pressure. If the calculation of p_{NO} as described above is to succeed, then α^* must be independent of pressure or be a linear function of the pressure.

But both requirements are not quite correct; rather, from

$$K_{p_{\text{NO}_2/\text{N}_2\text{O}_4}} = \frac{4\alpha^2}{1-\alpha^2} p_{\text{ges.}} \quad \text{we have} \quad \alpha_{\text{N}_2\text{O}_4} = \sqrt{\frac{K_p}{4p_{\text{ges.}} + K_p}}$$

or from

$$K_{p_{\text{NO}, \text{NO}_2/\text{N}_2\text{O}_4}} = \frac{\alpha^2}{1-\alpha^2} p_{\text{ges.}} \quad \text{we have} \quad \alpha_{\text{N}_2\text{O}_4} = \sqrt{\frac{K_p}{p_{\text{ges.}} + K_p}}$$

However, from our studies it turned out that a sufficiently accurate calculation of the partial pressure is possible nevertheless. This fact is understandable if we examine the pressure dependence of the α -values for the equilibria (I) and (II) more closely.

In Figure 5, the degree of dissociation is plotted as a function of the pressure for equilibrium (II) at 20°C according to

Natanson [38].

Figure 4 shows the same dependence for equilibrium (I) according to Abel and Proisl [1] at 25°C.

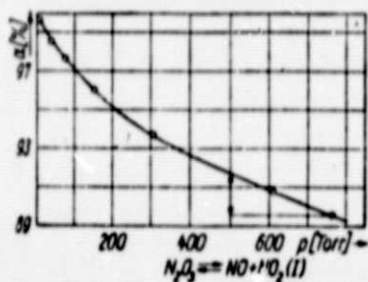


Figure 4: Pressure dependence of the degree of dissociation α for equilibrium (II)

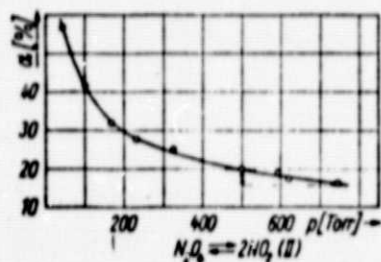


Figure 5: Pressure dependence of the degree of dissociation α for equilibrium (II)

From the course of the curves, we can see that the influence of pressure on the degree of dissociation is relatively low in the region of importance to the measurements (about 500-760 Torr). The maximal deviations for equilibrium (II) are 4% of the α -value; for equilibrium (I), 2% of the α -value. As the experimental results confirm, these changes have no noticeable influence and lie within the limits of error of the measurement method.

In the following tables, the measured values for the absorption of N_2O_3 in sulfuric acid are summarized:

The volume data relate to standard conditions of temperature and pressure.

Table 1: Measured Values of the Absorption performed at 19°C.

weight. % H_2SO_4	$1 N_2O_3$ 100 g H_2SO_4	Mol N_2O_3 Mol H_2SO_4	color of solution	% prec	°C m.p.	% N	% S
50.7	0.21	0.018	black				
55.3	0.27	0.021	blue				
60.5	0.30	0.050	blue				
65.3	1.38	0.091	green				
70.2	2.47	0.154	yellowgreen				
75.2	3.90	0.209	"	10	73	10.8	25.0
80.4	4.97	0.271	"	40	71		
85.5	6.10	0.308	yellow	60	71	10.9	25.2
90.1	6.78	0.329	"	70	72		
95.1	7.88	0.358	"	85	71	10.8	25.1
99.8	8.68	0.381	"	95	72	10.9	25.1

Table 2: Measured values of the Absorption performed at 60°C.

weight-% H ₂ SO ₄	$\frac{1 \text{ N}_2\text{O}_5}{100 \text{ g H}_2\text{SO}_4}$	$\frac{\text{Mol N}_2\text{O}_5}{\text{Mol H}_2\text{SO}_4}$	color of solution	% prec	°C m.p.	% N	% S
66.3	0.15	0.012	entirely blueblack				
66.5	0.38	0.028	black				
66.8	3.05	0.092	bluegreen				
70.2	1.68	0.105	yellowgreen				
75.2	2.53	0.147	yellow				
80.4	3.93	0.214	"				
86.5	5.43	0.275	"	70	72	10.9	25.2
90.1	6.50	0.316	"	90	71	11.0	25.1
96.1	8.08	0.368	"	95	73	10.9	25.2
99.8	9.01	0.395	"	100	72	10.8	25.0

Table 3: Measured values of the Absorption performed at 95°C.

169

weight-% H ₂ SO ₄	$\frac{1 \text{ N}_2\text{O}_5}{100 \text{ g H}_2\text{SO}_4}$	$\frac{\text{Mol N}_2\text{O}_5}{\text{Mol H}_2\text{SO}_4}$	color of solution
66.3	0.098	0.0076	entirely blueblack
66.5	0.21	0.015	yellowblack
66.8	0.65	0.043	yellow
70.2	1.22	0.076	yellow
75.2	1.97	0.115	yellow
80.4	3.10	0.169	yellow
86.5	4.12	0.208	1.01 green
			1.51 violet
			2.61 yellow
90.1	4.68	0.223	1.21 green
			2.21 violet
			2.51 yellow
96.1	4.92	0.226	Only a brief, weak green and violet coloration
99.8	5.24	0.230	

3.2 Solutions

The sulfuric acids needed for the absorption were prepared by dilution of concentrated H_2SO_4 . A precise determination of concentration was performed by titration or, in the case of the 100% H_2SO_4 , by conductivity measurement.

NO_2 was prepared according to the method of Meldrum [39] from copper and nitric acid in a stream of oxygen.

Of the different methods for preparing NO , we selected that of Johnston and Glauque [40] in which semi-concentrated sulfuric acid is added by drops to a solution of KNO_2 and KI .

The gases were dried before the absorption measurements by phosphorus (v)-oxide.

3.3 Analysis

The sulfur determination was done gravimetrically as BaSO_4 . For the nitrogen determination, the available N^{3+} was reduced by Devard-alloy and determined according to Kjeldahl.

3.4 Spectra

The spectra were taken with the UR 10 of the People's Carl Zeiss Co., Jena. The preparation and recording techniques of Stopperka [19] were applied.

3.5 X-ray Photographs

The goniometer recordings were prepared with the horizontal counter tube goniometer of the People's Freiberg Precision Mechanics Co. The locations of the X-ray interferences of NOHSO_4 are shown as a bar graph in Figure 6.



Figure 6: Powder data (debyeogram) of NOHSO_4 .

The exact location of the interferences with the attendant intensities determined from 5 photographs can be seen in Table 4.

Photo conditions: Cu-K_α radiation, Ni-filter, 35 kV.

Table 4: X-ray Interference of NOHSO_4 .

θ	I	θ	I
13,4	3 D	23,4	4 D
13,7	1	23,8	1 D
14,15	2	25,15	2 D
14,25	2	25,65	1 T
14,45	3-4 T	26,2	2 D
15,4	3 T	26,6	4 D
17,35	5 T	27,05	2 D
18,05	1 2	27,35	1
18,5	2-3 D	27,6	0-1
18,8	2	27,95	1-2 D
19,6	3 T	29,1	1
20,4	1	30,1	2 T
21,85	1	34,0	3 D
22,6	2-3 D	34,1	3 D

D = doublet

T = Triplet

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